

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 28, 2008. Claims 1 to 4, 6 and 7 are in the application, with Claim 5 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejection applied against it. Claim 1 is the independent claim and has been amended herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,530,264 (Kataoka) in view of Colloids and Surfaces B: Biointerfaces, vol. 19, 2000, pp. 257-261 (Inoue). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kataoka and Inoue in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,731,156 (Montmarquet). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kataoka and Inoue in view of Japan 2000-058892 (Tawada) and U.S. Patent No. 6,127,623 (Nakamura). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kataoka and Inoue in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,534,703 (Dinwoodie). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a solar cell module. The solar cell module includes a solar cell element, and a front surface member provided so as to cover a light incidence surface of the solar cell element to provide an outermost surface of the solar cell module. The front surface member includes a fluoride polymer film having a light incidence surface subjected to a discharge treatment, and the light incidence surface of the fluoride polymer film has a contact angle with water of 75° to 95°.

By virtue of this arrangement, it is ordinarily possible to more fully produce the effect of the discharge treatment, while maintaining an adequate mechanical strength of the film.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or suggest the features of the present invention, and in particular is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the feature of a fluoride polymer film having a light incidence surface subjected to a discharge treatment, wherein the light incidence surface has a contact angle with water of 75° to 95°.

Page 3 of the Office Action concedes that Kataoka fails to teach application of a discharge treatment to the outermost light incident side of a polymer film, but relies on Inoue for this feature. Page 4 of the Office Action, in connection with its rejection of now-canceled Claim 5, asserts that Kataoka (Column 9, lines 22 to 26) discloses an advantage of having “70° or above in surface contact angle against water”.

Inoue discloses a bombardment technique for increasing the hydrophobicity of a surface of a polytera-fluoroethylene (PTFE) sheet. More specifically, as shown in Inoue’s Figure 4 and the accompanying text, the contact angle of water with Inoue’s pristine PTFE is 102.5°, and Inoue’s bombardment technique drives the contact angle much higher, even up to 150-170°. See Inoue, Figure 4, Abstract, and pages 259 and 260.

Assuming for purposes of argument that Inoue and Kataoka can be combined, Inoue and Kataoka are not seen to disclose the features of the present invention. In particular, as understood by Applicants, if Inoue’s bombardment technique of an outermost light incident side were combined with Kataoka, the result would lead to a contact angle with water higher than 102.5°, and even up to 170°.

Thus, as seen by Applicants, a combination of Inoue and Kataoka can not lead to a fluoride polymer film having a light incidence surface subjected to a discharge treatment, wherein the light incidence surface has a contact angle with water of 75° to 95°.

Montmarquet, Tawada, Nakamura, and Dinwoodie have been reviewed and

are not seen to remedy the deficiencies of Kataoka and Inoue.

Therefore, independent Claim 1 is believed to be allowable, and such action is respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from the independent claim discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

No fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

/Michael J. Guzniczak/
Michael J. Guzniczak
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 59,820

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3800
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

FCBS_WS 2393196v1